
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1510

Brief Description: Regarding disclosure of confidential information on birth certificates.

Sponsors: Representatives Ross, Klippert and Johnson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that an individual may view the confidential section of their own birth certificate without first obtaining a court order.

Hearing Date: 2/10/09

Staff: Kyle Gotchy (786-7119); Chris Cordes (786-7103)

Background:

Vital Records and Birth Certificates

Vital records are records of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, dissolution, annulment, and legal separation, as maintained under the supervision of the state registrar of vital statistics at the Department of Health (DOH). State law requires that certificates containing vital statistics include, at a minimum, the items recommended by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The DOH uses a standard live birth form, developed by the NCHS and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, as the basis for the state certificate. The non-confidential, public portion of a birth certificate contains information including: the mother's Social Security number; the county of birth; whether a Social Security number was requested for the child; and the name of the birth facility. Certified copies of birth certificates are available through the state registrar or local deputy registrar.

Confidential Information

Under state law, certain sections of a certificate of live birth are not subject to public inspection, nor may they be included on certified copies of the record except upon court order. The

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Washington State Board of Health (Board) is authorized to require the inclusion within birth certificates of any additional information relative to the birth and manner of delivery as may be deemed necessary for statistical study. In addition to the federally established standard, the Board requires 11 additional pieces of information, each contained within the certificate's confidential section. The table below lists a sampling of the approximately 50 items of statistical information contained in the confidential sections of a Washington State birth certificate and the applicable differences between the State and U.S. standard:

Item Number	Item Name	Difference from U.S. Standard, if any
15	Is mother married to the father? If no, was mother married to anyone during the pregnancy? Has the paternity affidavit been signed?	Additional state requirement
20	Mother's education	Add: "Specify": next to box for "8th Grade or less"
21	Mother of Hispanic origin?	(same)
22	Mother's race	(same)
23	Mother's occupation	Additional state requirement
24	Mother's kind of business/ industry	Additional state requirement
29	Father's education	Add "Specify": next to box for "8th Grade or less"
39	Cigarette smoking before and during pregnancy?	(same)
46	Principal source of payment for this delivery	Add "Indian Health" and "CHAMPUS"
49	Infant head circumference	Added
59	Infections present and/or treated during pregnancy	Add "HIV infection" and "Other: Specify"

Public Requests for Research Purposes

A person may request and receive vital records information without personal identifiers (e.g., names and addresses) for research purposes or statistical study where certain conditions are met in order to safeguard the confidentiality of the records. If a person requests birth certificate confidential information with personal identifiers for research purposes, however, he or she must obtain approval through a standing human research review board.

Summary of Bill:

A person may review, without a court order, the confidential section of his or her own birth certificate. The person's request is subject to the confirmation of his or her identity in a manner approved by the Washington State Board of Health.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.